

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4185

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO

SUBJ: AZORES REVOLT

REF: (A) LISBON 4044; (B) LISBON 4174 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: AZORES MILITARY GOVERNOR ALTINO DE MAGALHAES HAS
AUTHORITY TO NAME SIX-MEMBER JUNTA GOVERNATIVA, WHICH HE WILL
HEAD. PCP, MDP, MES DELEGATION ARE ATTEMPTING TO GET THEIR OWN
CANDIDATES NAMED BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. EMBASSY HAS HEARD
THAT PCP MAY FEEL THAT COMMUNISTS WOULD BENEFIT FROM AZORES
SEPARATIST MOVEMENT. NAMING COMMUNITIES OR THEIR ALLIES
TO JUNTA COULD TRIGGER REVOLT BY SEPARATISTS. END SUMMARY

1. AZOREAN JUNTA GOVERNATIVA: AZORES MILITARY GOVERNOR
ALTINO DE MAGALHAES HAS AUTHORITY TO NAME THE SIX MEMBERS
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OF THE NEWLY CREATED JUNTA GOVERNATIVA, WHICH HE WILL

HEAD. JUNTA WILL HAVE TWO MEMBERS FROM EACH OF THE THREE AUTONOMOUS DISTRICTS. WE HAVE HEARD THAT IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO ASK ONLY PS, MDP, AND PPD TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES. HOWEVER, AS REPORTED REF (A), REPRESENTATIVES FROM PCP, MDP, AND MES HAVE COME FROM AZORES TO PRESENT CANDIDATES DIRECTLY TO REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

2. GOP DECISION ON JUNTA MEMBERSHIP: GOP DECISION ON JUNTA MEMBERSHIP WILL BE IMPORTANT. IF GOP NAMES CANDIDATES PROPOSED BY COMMUNISTS AND THEIR ALLIES, WHO GOT UNDER SIX PERCENT OF THE VOTE, IT WILL ANGER THE ISLANDERS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT SEPARATISTS THREATENED NOT TO PERMIT THE PCP, MDP, MES DELEGATION TO RETURN TO AZORES.

3. PCP POSITION: A CURIOUS TWIST TO THE AZORES SITUATION IS THE INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM SEVERAL EMBASSY SOURCES RECENTLY THAT THE COMMUNISTS WOULD FAVOR A SUCCESSFUL INDEPENDENCE MOVE. ALLEGED PCP VIEW IS THAT AZORES INDEPENDENCE WOULD (A) PROVIDE EMOTIONAL ISSUE TO RALLY PUBLIC AGAINST US, WESTERN EUROPE AND THE PORTUGUESE DEMOCRATS, (B) ARREST THE DECLINE IN COMMUNIST SUPPORT, (C) PROVIDE MARCH 11-TYPE EXCUSE FOR MOVE TO LEFT AND AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND MILITARY, AND (D) REDUCE US INTEREST IN PORTUGAL AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE MODERATES AFTER TH US GAINED ITS ONLY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE, THE LAJES BASE. PCP IS SAID TO BELIEVE THAT WITH LAJES ASSURED, US WOULD OPT FOR LETTING PORTUGAL GO COMMUNIST AS "VACCINATION" FOR REST OF SOUTHERN EUROPE. ELEMENTS OF THIS POINT OF VIEW WERE ALSO DESCRIBED TO DATT BY A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENT'S STAFF (REF B). REF (A) NOTES SUDDEN INCREASE IN REPORTING ON AZORES SEPARATION IN LISBON PRESS ACCOMPANIED BY ALLEGATIONS THAT US INVOLVED.

4. AN OPPOSITE POINT OF VIEW HELD BY SOME HERE IS THAT A REVOLT IN THE AZORES WOULD TRIGGER A COMPLEMENTARY REVOLT AGAINST THE GOP, IN A METROPOLE ALREADY SEEING WAVE OF ATTACKS ON PCP HEADQUARTERS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

5. COMMENT: GOP FACES DIFFICULT DECISION. PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES AND HIS COMMUNIST ALLIES IN THE MEDIA, ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT, AND THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDER THE PCP, MDP, AND MES CONFIDENTIAL

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PART OF THE "PROGRESSIVE VANGUARD OF THE REVOLUTION." THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT HESITATED IN THE PAST TO IMPOSE COMMUNIST-LINING AUTHORITIES ON THE ISLANDS. HOWEVER, TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO AGAIN, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE FORCED RESIGNATION OF THE MDP GOVERNOR ON SAO MIGUEL, WILL BE RUBBING THE ISLANDERS FACE IN IT. IT COULDBE A TRIGGER FOR AN INDEPENDENCE MOVE BY THE SEPARATISTS. AS FAR AS WE KNOW DECISION ON JUNTA NEED NOT BE MADE UNTIL CURRENT GOP

CRISIS RESOLVED.
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